



Classic

CLASSIC
STAR WARS
16

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C L A S S I C

STAR WARS



ARCHIE GOODWIN • AL WILLIAMSON



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WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

Luke Skywalker and General Dodonna's son, Vrad, get into a tussle over Vrad's loyalties, but break it off before any serious harm can be done, and take off for a showdown with Darth Vader. They use the power gem to attack Vader's Executor, but Vader senses both the power gem as well as Luke using the Force. Vrad drops Luke off on a nearby planetoid in order to go it alone, but Vader turns his battle cruiser around to seek out Luke. Han and Chewbacca retrieve Luke from the planetoid, as Vrad pilots his fighter directly into Vader's battle cruiser on a kamikaze mission that doesn't quite succeed. But it does provide distraction enough to allow the Millennium Falcon to attack the unshielded rear of Vader's craft, causing some damage to the gyro-control system. That's enough to buy the Rebels time to evacuate Yavin base and head for Hoth, with Luke receiving a field promotion to Commander from General Dodonna before they leave. As the last Rebel transport leaves, General Dodonna stays behind on Yavin Four to await the Imperial attack.



As Imperial bombers dive on the base where he has stayed behind...General Dodonna speaks to Luke over the comlink.

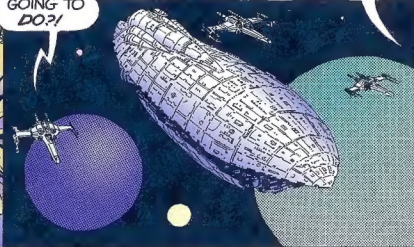
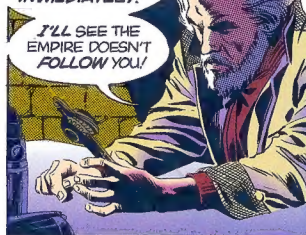
YOU
HAVE YOUR
ORDERS,
COMMANDER...

...GET THAT LAST
TRANSPORT YOUR FLIGHT
IS ESCORTING TO THE
RENDEZVOUS
IMMEDIATELY!

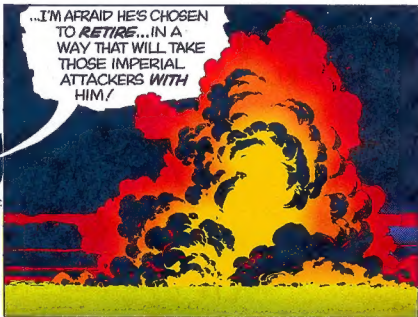
I'LL SEE THE
EMPIRE DOESN'T
FOLLOW YOU!

LUKE! WHAT'S GENERAL
DODONNA TALKING
ABOUT? WHAT'S HE
GOING TO
DO?!

FROM HIS REMARKS ABOUT HIS
HEALTH FAILING SINCE THE
DEATH OF HIS SON, WEDGE...



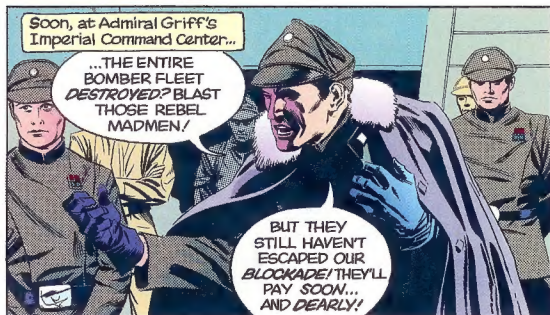
...I'M AFRAID HE'S CHOSEN
TO *RETIRE*...IN A
WAY THAT WILL TAKE
THOSE IMPERIAL
ATTACKERS *WITH*
HIM!



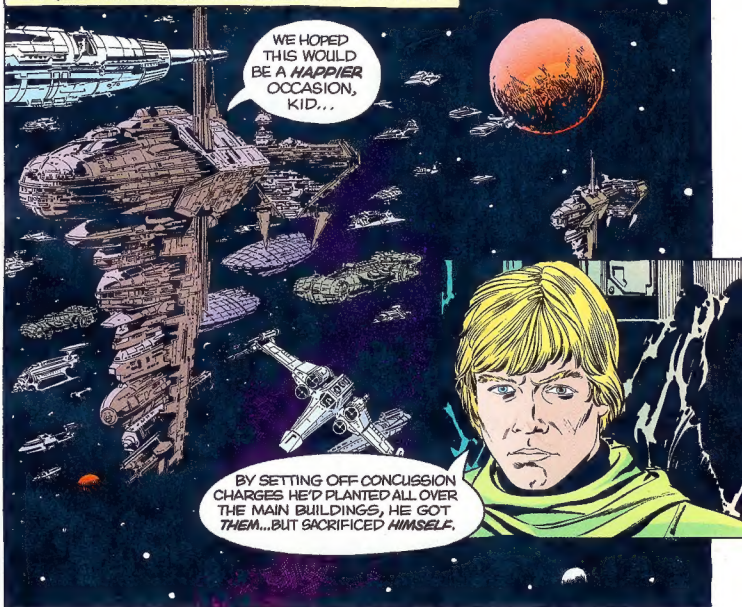
General Dodonna ends his career with the
Rebel Alliance in a *WARRIOR'S* way...



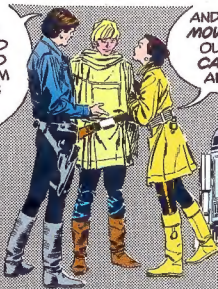
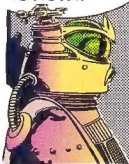
...and diving
Imperial ships
find their
TARGET has become
a devastating *TRAP*!



THE REBEL RENDEZVOUS! Luke's flight arrives with the last transport... and the news of General Dodonna's sacrifice.



HE WENT OUT
THE WAY AN OLD
WARRIOR WOULD
WANT TO, KID... AND
WE'LL HONOR HIM
BY GETTING THIS
FLEET SAFELY
TO **HOTH!**

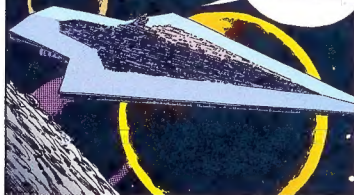


AND THE **FIRST**
MOVE IS UP TO
OUR **MON**
CALAMARI
ALLIES!



A REPORT FROM ADMIRAL GRIFF,
LORD VADER! THE REBELS HAVE
SUCCESSFULLY ABANDONED
THEIR YAVIN SYSTEM
HEADQUARTERS.

BUT
HAVE THEY
ESCAPED THE
IMPERIAL
BLOCKADE?



RUSH
NOTHING.
I AM
CONTENT
TO TRUST
THE
ADMIRAL...
FOR NOW.



NOT YET, SIR! I'LL
RUSH OUR REPAIR EFFORTS
SO YOU CAN TAKE COMMAND
FROM GRIFF AND--

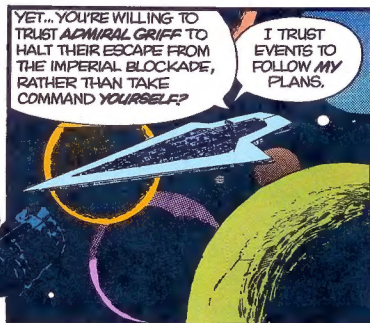
L-LORD VADER...
I DON'T **UNDERSTAND!**
SURELY BY NOW
LUKE SKYWALKER
IS BACK WITH
THE REBELS...
I THOUGHT
YOU **WANTED**
HIM!

MOST
DEFINITELY.



YET... YOU'RE WILLING TO
TRUST ADMIRAL GRIFF TO
HALT THEIR ESCAPE FROM
THE IMPERIAL BLOCKADE,
RATHER THAN TAKE
COMMAND **YOURSELF?**

I TRUST
EVENTS TO
FOLLOW MY
PLANS.

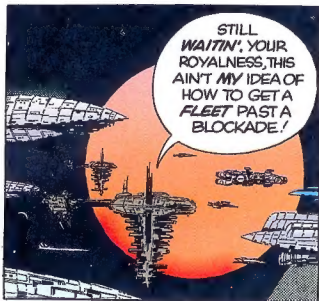


READY MY CRUISER! TO ESCAPE OUR BLOCKADE, THE REBELS MUST MOVE SOON...I INTEND TO BE WAITING WHEN THEY DO!

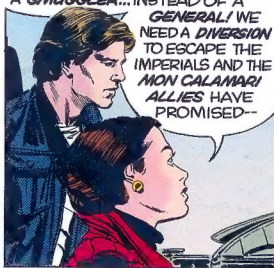
YES, ADMIRAL GRIFF!



STILL WAITIN', YOUR ROYALNESS, THIS AIN'T MY IDEA OF HOW TO GET A FLEET PAST A BLOCKADE!

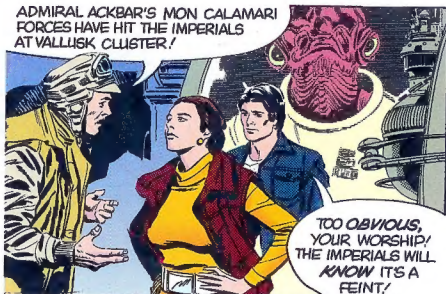


HAN, PERHAPS THAT'S WHY YOU'RE A SMUGGLER... INSTEAD OF A GENERAL! WE NEED A DIVERSION TO ESCAPE THE IMPERIALS AND THE MON CALAMARI ALLIES HAVE PROMISED--



ADMIRAL ACKBAR'S MON CALAMARI FORCES HAVE HIT THE IMPERIALS AT VALLUSK CLUSTER!

PRINCESS! URGENT COMMUNICATION FROM ADMIRAL ACKBAR!



TOO OBVIOUS, YOUR WORSHIP! THE IMPERIALS WILL KNOW IT'S A FEINT!

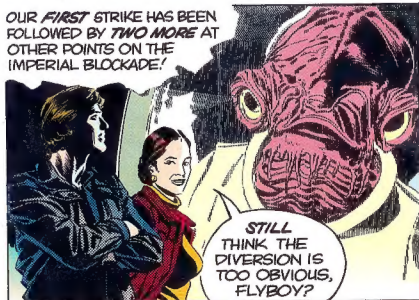
THEY'LL SIT *TIGHT!*
THE MOMENT A CARAVAN
THIS SIZE MOVES,
EVERY SCANNER
WILL LIGHT UP...



...AND THEIR
BLOCKADE
CAN CLOSE
ON US LIKE
A *FIST!*



OUR *FIRST* STRIKE HAS BEEN
FOLLOWED BY *TWO MORE* AT
OTHER POINTS ON THE
IMPERIAL BLOCKADE!



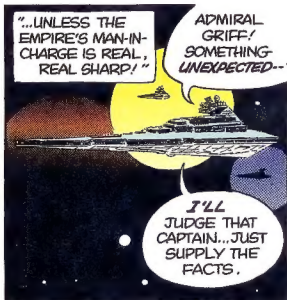
STILL
THINK THE
DIVERSION IS
TOO OBVIOUS,
FLYBOY?

WE *MIGHT* JUST MAKE IT
TO HOTH AFTER ALL, YOUR
WORSHIP...



"...UNLESS THE
EMPIRE'S MAN-IN-
CHARGE IS REAL,
REAL SHARP!"

ADMIRAL
GRIFF!
SOMETHING
UNEXPECTED--



I'LL
JUDGE THAT
CAPTAIN...JUST
SUPPLY THE
FACTS.

AT FIRST, WE SUSPECTED A *FEINT*, ADMIRAL GRIFF... BUT THE BLOCKADE'S BEEN HIT AT THREE DIFFERENT POINTS. IT'S A *MAJOR ATTACK!*

AND BY THE *MON CALAMARI!*

WE DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE *ALLIED* WITH THE REBELS! I'LL INFORM *LORD VADER* IMMEDIATELY, SIR!

LET HIM LEARN THROUGH *NORMAL CHANNELS*. I'LL HANDLE THIS *MYSELF!*

ADMIRAL GRIFF, IT SEEMS *DANGEROUS* TO PROCEED WITHOUT FULLY INFORMING LORD VADER!

HE PUT ME IN CHARGE OF THE BLOCKADE, CAPTAIN... IN RETURN FOR PAST FAVORS!

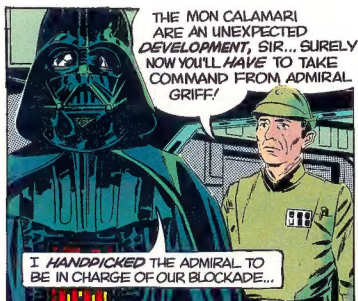
I WORKED IN HIS SHADOW FOR THE SAKE OF MY *CAREER*...NO LONGER!

TODAY, THE REBEL ESCAPE WILL BE *STOPPED*... THE REBELLION *CRUSHED!* BY ME! ALONE!

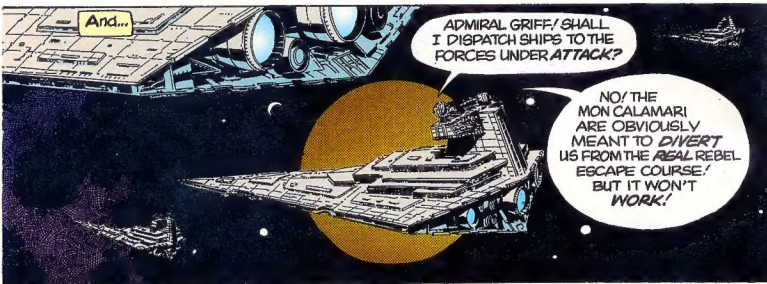
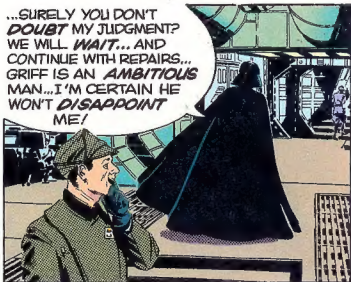
Imperial Admiral Griff turns from his aide...to intently study star chart displays for the sector he blockades.

BEFORE WE CAN STOP THE REBEL ESCAPE... THE *MON CALAMARI* MUST BE DEALT WITH! SHALL I TAKE ACTION?

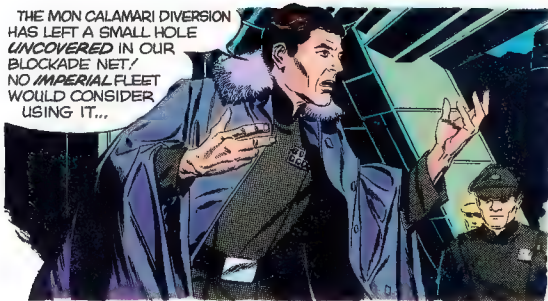
SIR?
SIR?!



...SURELY YOU DON'T DOUBT MY JUDGMENT? WE WILL WAIT... AND CONTINUE WITH REPAIRS... GRIFF IS AN AMBITIOUS MAN... I'M CERTAIN HE WON'T DISAPPOINT ME!

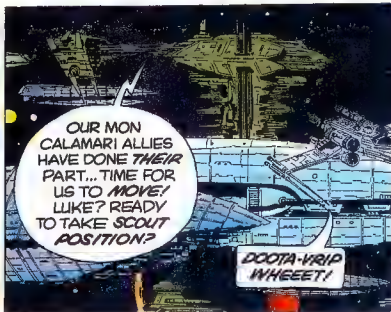


THE MON CALAMARI DIVERSION
HAS LEFT A SMALL HOLE
UNCOVERED IN OUR
BLOCKADE NET!
NO *IMPERIAL* FLEET
WOULD CONSIDER
USING IT...



...BUT A *SMALLER* FORCE
LIKE THE REBELS HAVE
MIGHT MAKE IT!
FULL SPEED...

...WHEN THEY
TRY, WE'LL BE
THERE
WAITING!



OUR MON
CALAMARI ALLIES
HAVE DONE *THEIR*
PART... TIME FOR
US TO *MOVE*!
LUKE? READY
TO TAKE *SCOUT*
POSITION?

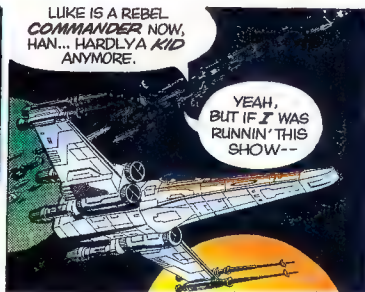
DOOTA-VRIIP
WHEEET!

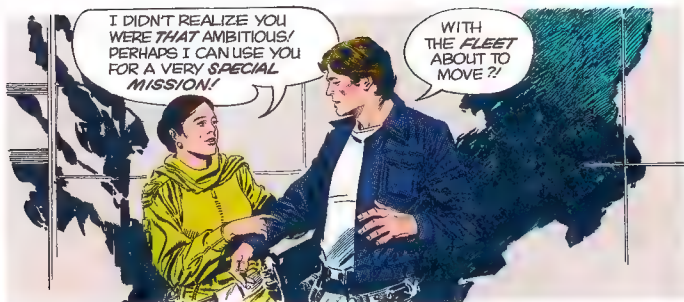
ARTOO
SAYS WE'RE
BOTH READY,
PRINCESS!

YOU'RE NOT
LETTING THE KID
SCOUT ALONE IN THAT
SNUB FIGHTER? HE
SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE
THE *MILLENNIUM FALCON'S*
FIREPOWER!

LUKE IS A REBEL
COMMANDER NOW,
HAN... HARDLY A *KID*
ANYMORE.

YEAH,
BUT IF I' WAS
RUNNIN' THIS
SHOW--





I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE *THAT* AMBITIOUS! PERHAPS I CAN USE YOU FOR A VERY SPECIAL MISSION!

WITH THE *FLEET* ABOUT TO MOVE ?!



The Rebel fleet roars into life, ready to begin the escape to Hoth...

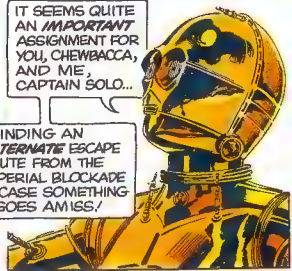
...even as the *MILLENNIUM FALCON* zooms away on a mission of its own!



I CAN'T BELIEVE LEIA WOULD *DO* THIS! SENDING ME *AWAY* JUST AS THE FLEET'S HEADIN' OUT!

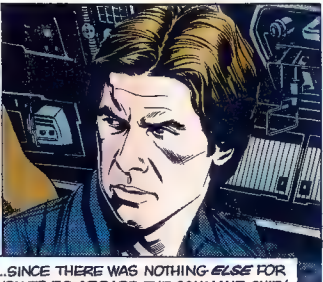
IT SEEMS QUITE AN *IMPORTANT* ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU, CHEWBACCA, AND ME, CAPTAIN SOLO...

...FINDING AN *ALTERNATE* ESCAPE ROUTE FROM THE IMPERIAL BLOCKADE IN CASE SOMETHING GOES AMISS!





OF COURSE, THE PRINCESS WON'T GET THE BENEFIT OF ALL THE **ADVICE** YOU'VE BEEN OFFERING...



"...SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING **ELSE** FOR YOU TO DO ABOARD THE COMMAND SHIP! NO DOUBT SHE'LL MISS SOME OF **MY** OBSERVATIONS, TOO!"

Meanwhile...



THE LONG-RANGE SCANNERS HAVE DETECTED A LARGE AND SUDDEN EXPENDITURE OF **HEAT ENERGY**. ADMIRAL GRIFF! THE REBELS **MUST** BE MOVING...



RIGHT INTO MY **HANDS!**

And Luke scouts ahead for the Rebel escape fleet...

VA-DITTA TA BLEEP!



THE PRINCESS HAS SENT THEM TO LOOK FOR AN **ALTERNATE** COURSE?

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO HAVE A **BACK-UP**... BUT I BET THE **REAL** MISSION IS TO GET HAN OUT OF HER **HAIR!**



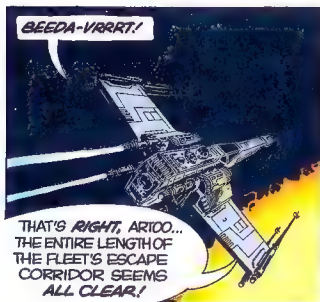
ADMIRAL
GRIFF, PERHAPS
NOW IS THE TIME
TO INFORM LORD
VADER WHAT
WE--

HE'LL LEARN
AFTERWARD... LIKE
THE **REST** OF THE
EMPIRE! THIS WILL
BE **MY TRIUMPH...**
MINE
ALONE!



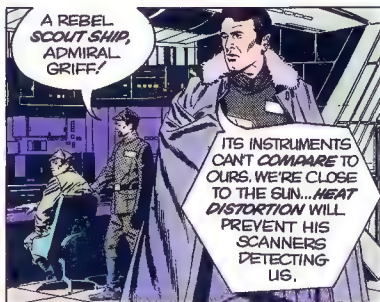
BEEEDA-VRRRT!

THAT'S **RIGHT**, ARTOO...
THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF
THE FLEET'S ESCAPE
CORRIDOR SEEMS
ALL CLEAR!



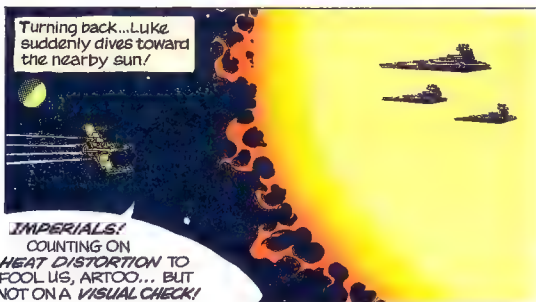
A REBEL
SCOUT SHIP,
ADMIRAL
GRIFF!

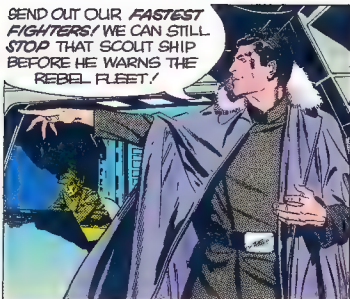
ITS INSTRUMENTS
CAN'T **COMPARE** TO
OURS. WE'RE CLOSE
TO THE SUN... **HEAT**
DISTORTION WILL
PREVENT HIS
SCANNERS
DETECTING
US.



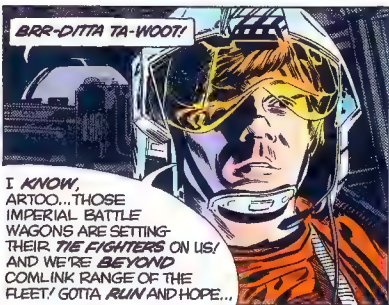
Turning back... Luke
suddenly dives toward
the nearby sun!

IMPERIALS!
COUNTING ON
HEAT DISTORTION TO
FOOL US, ARTOO... BUT
NOT ON A **VISUAL CHECK!**



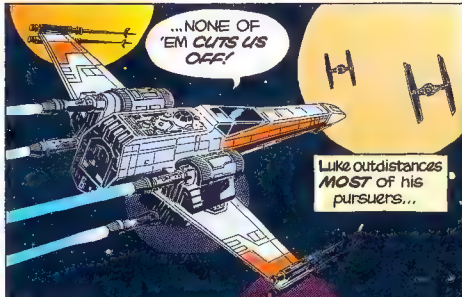


SEND OUT OUR **FASTEST**
FIGHTERS! WE CAN STILL
STOP THAT SCOUT SHIP
BEFORE HE WARNS THE
REBEL FLEET!



BRR-DITTA TA-WOOT!

I **KNOW**,
ARTOO...THOSE
IMPERIAL BATTLE
WAGONS ARE SETTING
THEIR **TIE FIGHTERS** ON US!
AND WE'RE **BEYOND**
COMLINK RANGE OF THE
FLEET! GOTTA **RUN** AND HOPE...



...NONE OF
'EM **CUTS US**
OFF!

Luke outdistances
MOST of his
pursuers...

...except for a crucial **TWO**
between him and warning the
Rebel fleet of the waiting
Imperial trap!



WE'RE
CUT OFF FROM
GETTING IN
COMLINK RANGE
OF OUR MAIN
FORCE,
ARTOO!



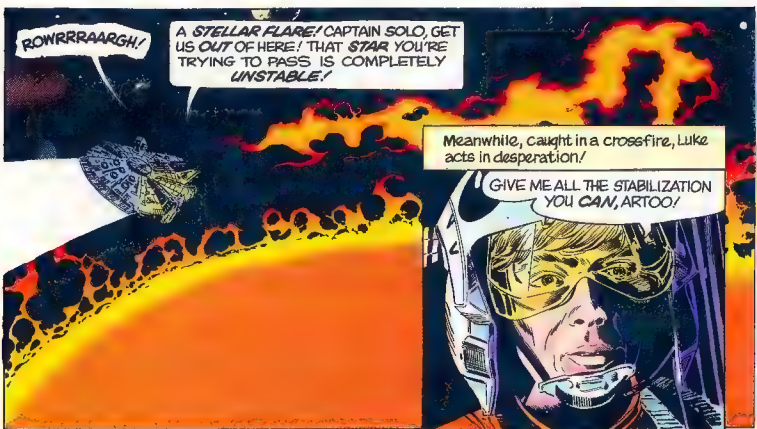
AND IF
THEY KEEP US
IN THIS *CROSSFIRE*...
WE WON'T *LAST*
LONG ENOUGH
TO EVER GET
CLOSER!

GIVE ME
FULL
STABILIZATION,
LITTLE GUY... I
GOTTA TRY
SOMETHING
DESPERATE!

Meantime, the *MILLENNIUM
FALCON* continues on
ITS mission...



I DIDN'T THINK THERE
WAS AN ALTERNATE ROUTE
THE IMPERIALS WOULDN'T
HAVE COVERED, CHEWIE!
BUT THIS *LOOKS*
LIKE--

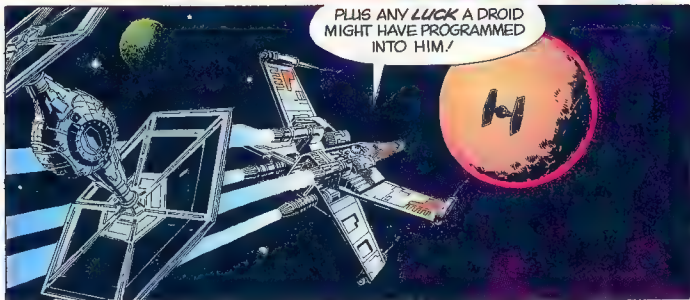


ROWRRRAARGH!

A *STELLAR FLARE*! CAPTAIN SOLO, GET
US *OUT* OF HERE! THAT *STAR* YOU'RE
TRYING TO PASS IS COMPLETELY
UNSTABLE!

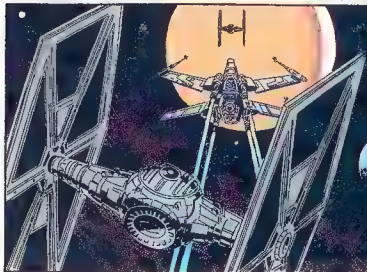
Meanwhile, caught in a crossfire, Luke
acts in desperation!

GIVE ME ALL THE STABILIZATION
YOU *CAN*, ARTOO!



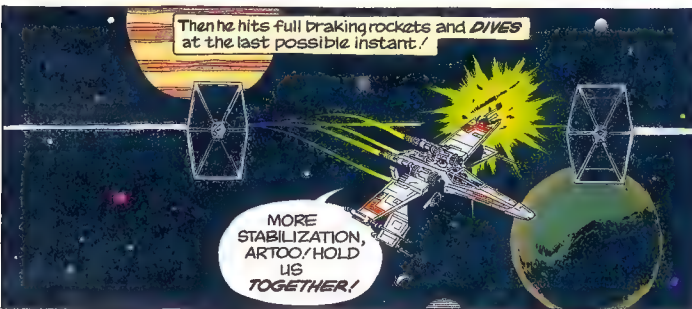
PLUS ANY *LUCK* A DROID
MIGHT HAVE PROGRAMMED
INTO HIM!

One Imperial *TIE* fighter still on his tail, Luke rushes on a *COLLISION COURSE* toward the *OTHER* before him!



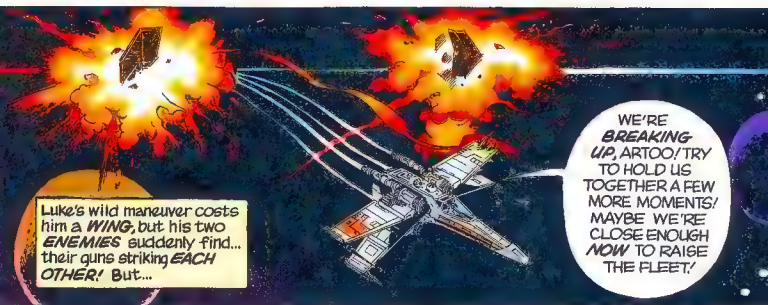
Then he hits full braking rockets and *DIVES* at the last possible instant!

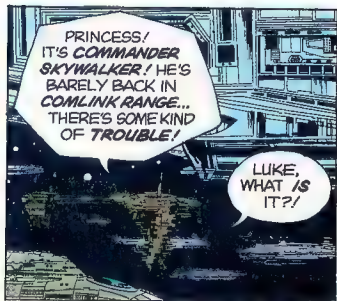
MORE STABILIZATION, ARTOO! HOLD US TOGETHER!



Luke's wild maneuver costs him a *WING*, but his two *ENEMIES* suddenly find... their guns striking *EACH OTHER*! But...

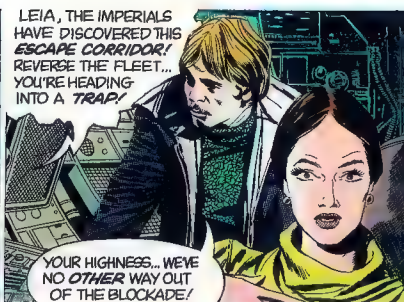
WE'RE *BREAKING UP*, ARTOO! TRY TO HOLD US TOGETHER A FEW MORE MOMENTS! MAYBE WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH NOW TO RAISE THE FLEET!





PRINCESS!
IT'S **COMMANDER
SKYWALKER!** HE'S
BARELY BACK IN
COMLINK RANGE...
THERE'S SOME KIND
OF **TROUBLE!**

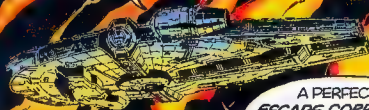
LUKE,
WHAT **IS**
IT?!



LEIA, THE IMPERIALS
HAVE DISCOVERED THIS
ESCAPE CORRIDOR!
REVERSE THE FLEET...
YOU'RE HEADING
INTO A **TRAP!**

YOUR HIGHNESS... WE'VE
NO **OTHER** WAY OUT
OF THE **BLOCKADE!**

"UNLESS... **HAN SOLO'S** FOUND SOMETHING!"



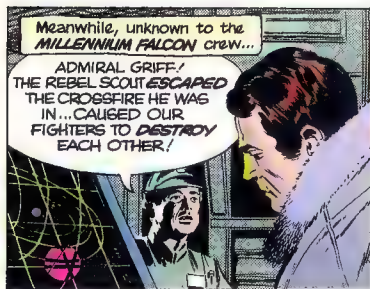
A PERFECT
ESCAPE CORRIDOR!
IF YOU DON'T MIND BEIN'
BURNED TO A CRISP BY A
STELLAR FLARE
AT ITS END!

GRRROWWWNNK!



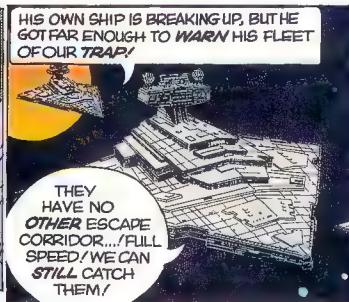
FOR ONCE, I **AGREE** WITH
CHEWBACCA! THAT STAR
IS **COMPLETELY UNSTABLE,**
SIR. THE LONGER WE STAY
IN ITS VICINITY, THE
MORE CHANCE ONE OF
THOSE **FLARES** MIGHT
CONSUME US!

OKAY, GOLDENROD!
TIME TO TELL HER
ROYALNESS WE
FAILED FINDING
AN **ALTERNATE**
ESCAPE ROUTE.



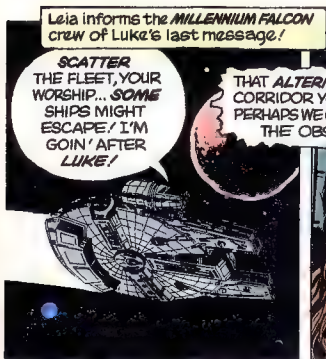
Meanwhile, unknown to the **MILLENNIUM FALCON** crew...

ADMIRAL GRIFF!
THE REBEL SCOUT **ESCAPED**
THE CROSSFIRE HE WAS
IN...CAUSED OUR
FIGHTERS TO **DESTROY**
EACH OTHER!



HIS OWN SHIP IS **BREAKING UP**, BUT HE
GOT FAR ENOUGH TO **WARN** HIS FLEET
OF OUR **TRAP**!

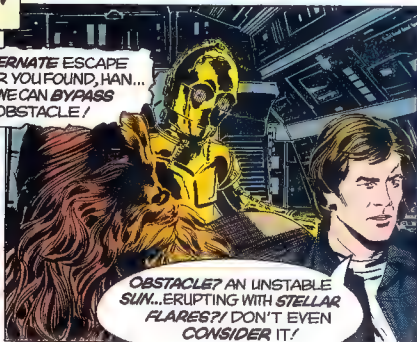
THEY
HAVE NO
OTHER ESCAPE
CORRIDOR.../FULL
SPEED./ WE CAN
STILL CATCH
THEM/



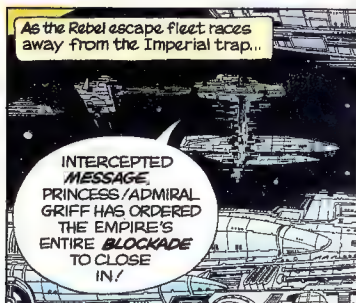
Leia informs the **MILLENNIUM FALCON**
crew of Luke's last message!

SCATTER
THE FLEET, YOUR
WORSHIP... **SOME**
SHIPS MIGHT
ESCAPE/ I'M
GOIN' AFTER
LUKE!

THAT **ALTERNATE** ESCAPE
CORRIDOR YOU FOUND, HAN...
PERHAPS WE CAN **BYPASS**
THE OBSTACLE!



OBSTACLE? AN UNSTABLE
SUN...ERUPTING WITH **STELLAR**
FLARES?/ DON'T EVEN
CONSIDER IT!



As the Rebel escape fleet races
away from the Imperial trap...

INTERCEPTED
MESSAGE,
PRINCESS/ADMIRAL
GRIFF HAS ORDERED
THE EMPIRE'S
ENTIRE **BLOCKADE**
TO **CLOSE**
IN/

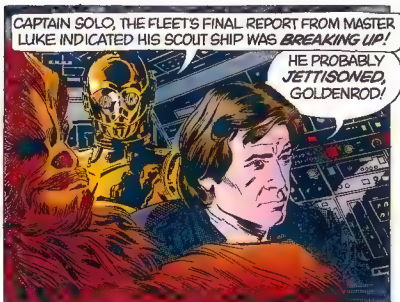


SHOULD WE **SCATTER**?
IT WILL MEAN MANY
LOSSES,
BUT...

THEN LET'S
NOT **RUSH**
TO GET
THEM...

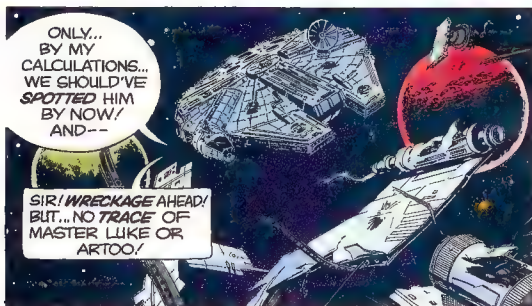


...ESPECIALLY
IF IN THE
MEANTIME HAN
MIGHT FIND
LUKE!



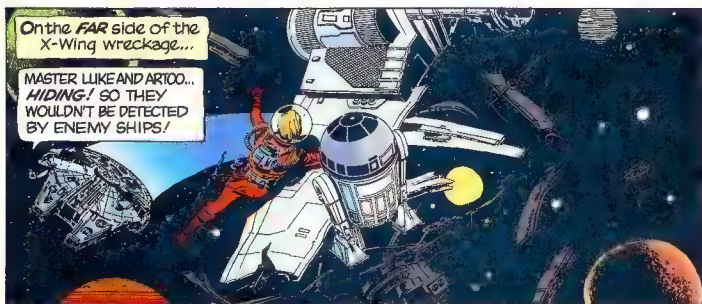
CAPTAIN SOLO, THE FLEET'S FINAL REPORT FROM MASTER
LUKE INDICATED HIS SCOUT SHIP WAS ***BREAKING UP!***

HE PROBABLY
**JETTISONED,
GOLDENROD!**



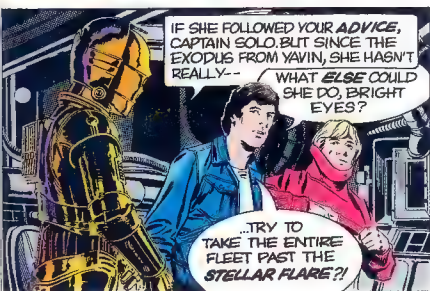
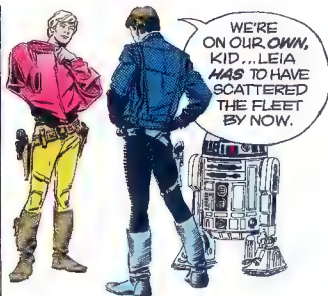
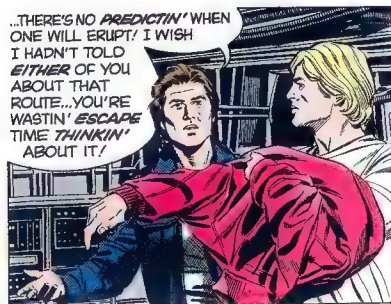
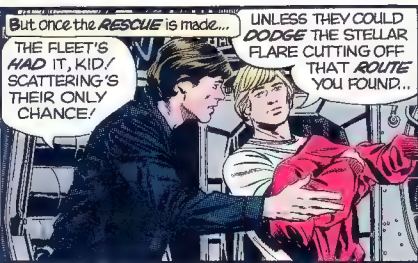
ONLY...
BY MY
CALCULATIONS...
WE SHOULD'VE
SPOTTED HIM
BY NOW!
AND--

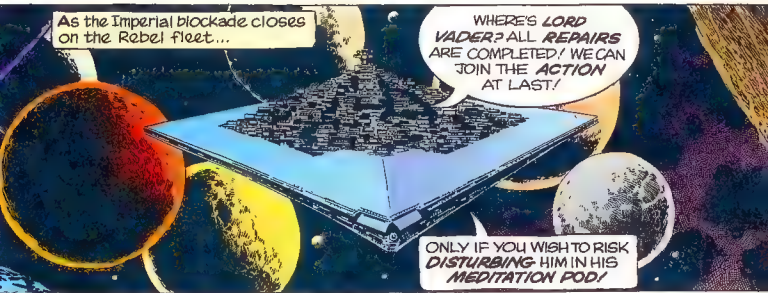
SIR! **WRECKAGE AHEAD!**
BUT... NO TRACE OF
MASTER LUKE OR
ARTOO!



On the ***FAR*** side of the
X-Wing wreckage...

MASTER LUKE AND ARTOO...
HIDING! SO THEY
WOULDN'T BE DETECTED
BY ENEMY SHIPS!





As the Imperial blockade closes on the Rebel fleet...

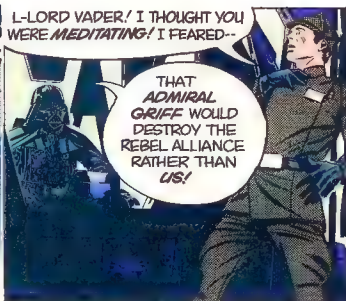
WHERE'S **LORD VADER**? ALL **REPAIRS** ARE COMPLETED! WE CAN JOIN THE **ACTION** AT LAST!

ONLY IF YOU WISH TO RISK **DISTURBING** HIM IN HIS **MEDITATION** POD!



...WE COULD **JOIN** IN CRUSHING THE ALLIANCE! INSTEAD, **ADMIRAL GRIFF** HOGS THE GLORY... WHILE WE WASTE--

YOU **MISTUDGE** GRIFF'S ROLE AND MY **MEDITATION**... **FATALLY!**



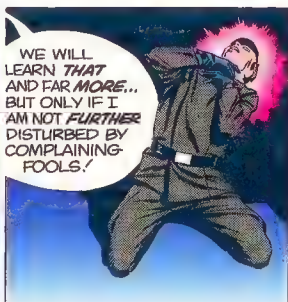
L-LORD VADER! I THOUGHT YOU WERE **MEDITATING**! I FEARED--

THAT **ADMIRAL GRIFF** WOULD DESTROY THE **REBEL ALLIANCE** RATHER THAN **US!**

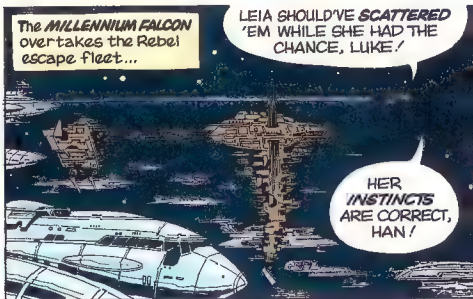
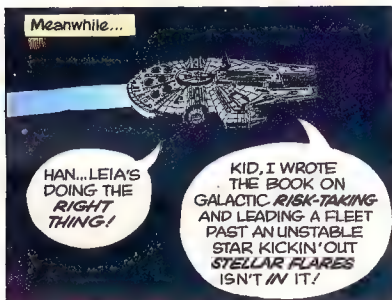
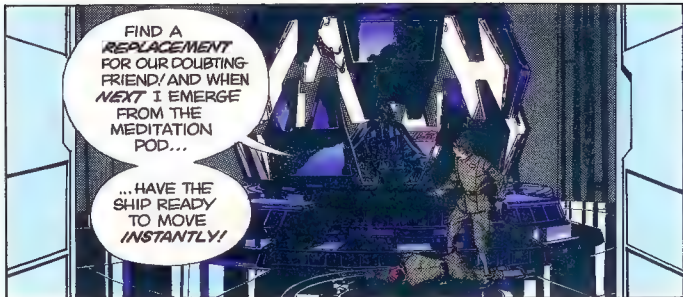


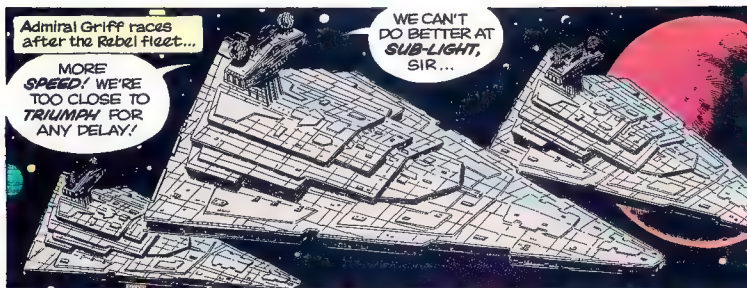
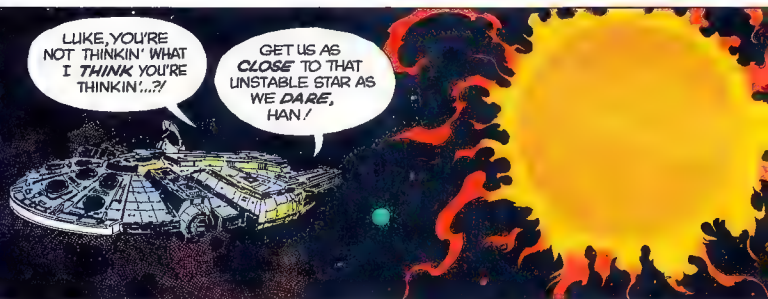
I'VE **USED** GRIFF... TO EXHAUST THE **REBELS** AND DRIVE THEM INTO **MY HANDS!**

B-BUT...WE'RE NOWHERE **NEAR** THEM... AND HAVE NO **NOTION** OF THEIR POSITION!



WE WILL LEARN **THAT** AND FAR **MORE...** BUT ONLY IF I AM NOT **FURTHER** DISTURBED BY **COMPLAINING-FOOLS!**





...BUT OUR ENTIRE IMPERIAL
BLOCKADE IS CLOSING-
LIKE A *VISE* ON THIS
SECTOR! EVEN IF THE
REBELS *SCATTER* NOW...
THEY CAN'T *ESCAPE*!

ADMIRAL
GRIFF!

LORD VADER'S CRUISER
IS NO LONGER
DISABLED! IT'S
READYING FOR
HYPERSPACE!

HE MEANS TO *ROB*
ME OF VICTORY! *NO!*
WHATEVER THE
RISK... I WON'T
ALLOW THAT!

Meanwhile, the
*MILLENNIUM
FALCON*
overtakes the
fleet! And...

LIKE, HOW
CAN WE *POSSIBLY*
HELP THEM PAST
THAT STELLAR-FIRE
SPITTIN'
NIGHTMARE?!

PERHAPS
THE *FORCE* WILL
BE WITH US!
CLOSER, HAN!

KID, ANY CLOSER AND WE'LL *FRY*, EVEN IF THAT SUN *DOESN'T* SEND A STELLAR FLARE ERUPTING OUR WAY!



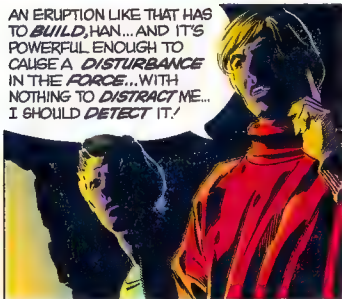
THEN... IT'S ALL UP TO *ME*.



KEEP A *COMLINK* OPEN TO LEIA AND THE FLEET, HAN... BUT SHUT DOWN ALL *OTHER* SYSTEMS.

LUKE, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE NEXT *STELLAR FLARE* ERUPTS ?!

AN ERUPTION LIKE THAT HAS TO *BUILD*, HAN... AND IT'S POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CAUSE A *DISTURBANCE* IN THE *FORCE*... WITH NOTHING TO *DISTRACT* ME... I SHOULD *DETECT* IT!

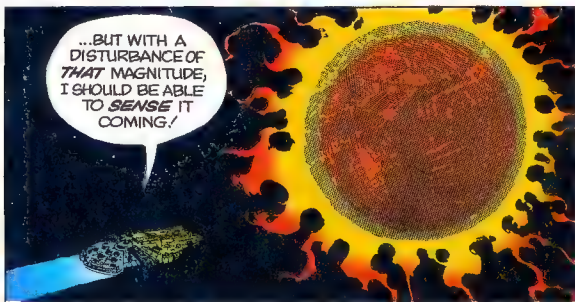


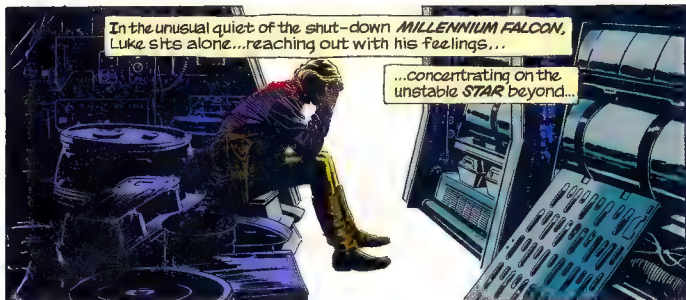
KID, WE'RE GAMBLIN' ON YOU BEING ABLE TO *DETECT* A STELLAR FLARE BUILDIN'... BY CONCENTRATING ON THE *FORCE*?



I'M NOT *BEN KENOBI*, HAN...

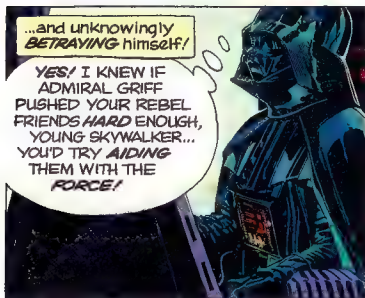
...BUT WITH A DISTURBANCE OF *THAT* MAGNITUDE, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO *SENSE* IT COMING!





In the unusual quiet of the shut-down *MILLENNIUM FALCON*, Luke sits alone...reaching out with his feelings...

...concentrating on the unstable *STAR* beyond...

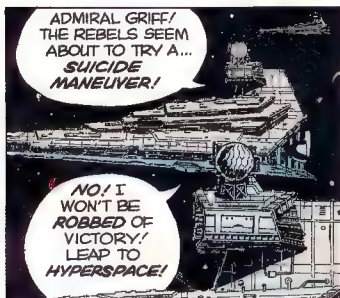


...and unknowingly *BETRAYING* himself!

YES! I KNEW IF ADMIRAL GRIFF PUSHED YOUR REBEL FRIENDS *HARD* ENOUGH, YOUNG SKYWALKER... YOU'D TRY *AIDING* THEM WITH THE *FORCE*!

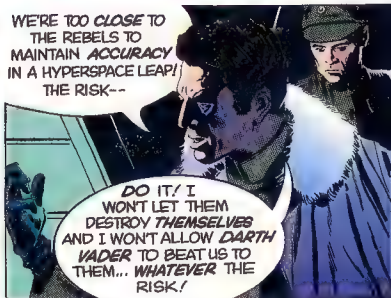


HAN...I SENSE *CALM*...NO DISTURBANCE IN THE *FORCE* YET FROM THAT SUN...TELL LEIA TO SEND PART OF THE *FLEET* THROUGH!



ADMIRAL GRIFF! THE REBELS SEEM ABOUT TO TRY A... *SUICIDE MANEUVER*!

NO! I WON'T BE *ROBBED* OF VICTORY! LEAP TO *HYPERSPACE*!



WE'RE TOO CLOSE TO THE REBELS TO MAINTAIN *ACCURACY* IN A *HYPERSPACE LEAP*! THE RISK--

DO IT! I WON'T LET THEM DESTROY *THEMSELVES* AND I WON'T ALLOW *DARTH VADER* TO BEAT US TO THEM... *WHATEVER* THE RISK!

The Adventure continues next month in *CLASSIC STAR WARS* #17!

STELLAR



10956 S.E. MAIN STREET

MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

I'm excited about this letter column! You readers continue to surprise and delight me with your reflections on and reactions to *Star Wars* things old and new. As mentioned last issue, I am extremely gratified that we here at Dark Horse have been at least some small part of stoking the fires of interest, creativity, and community. And boy, I must say, this first letter makes me feel a little bit like a proud papa:

James Addams
Tydirium Multimedia
PO Box 138488
Chicago, IL 60613

I'll begin this letter with a seemingly obligatory, but true statement: In fifteen-plus years of comics collecting, I've never once felt inclined to write to a comic before. The reason I'm breaking my silence is to congratulate all at Dark Horse for the excellent job you've been doing on your *Star Wars* series.

My story is the same as anyone else's . . . I first saw *Star Wars* in 1977 at age 9, and I've been hooked since. My collection of memorabilia is massive, but not nearly as big as my love for the saga itself, and the feelings that return whenever viewing a *SW* film.

As time went by, I grew up, went to college, and started a career in audio production. My interest in *SF* slowed to a trickle . . . until a few years ago. Around 1989 I started again to remember how much I loved the *SF* genre, and the *Star Wars* sagas in particular. Once again, trips to the comics stores became frequent, and I spent several afternoons in my parents' attic, dusting off the old memorabilia.

As the *SW* films continue to make a comeback in popularity, in parallel with my own enthusiasm, I find myself wishing that I had friends my age with whom I could

share this piece of my childhood. Reading through the letters pages in issues of *Classic Star Wars*, I discovered a letter by a person who seemed to be a lot like myself in other aspects, besides my love for our space saga. I wrote a letter to a stranger, and against all odds, a strong friendship developed, culminating in our decision to publish a *SW* magazine together.

I'll be sending along the first issue of *Blue Harvest* in about a week. We've had an overwhelming response, and next issue, we hope to double our print run and increase the page count from 24 to 32. We've got the material, we've got the enthusiasm, and we've got Dark Horse to thank for bringing together the fellow followers of the Force all over the world!

"Occasionally the writing is adversely affected by your editing, but more often it is the artwork — the panels you choose to drop or the artwork hidden by overlaying . . ."

Last week, I received a copy of the first issue of *Blue Harvest* from James and co-publisher Mary Jo Fox — and it does indeed appear to be a labor of love. As James continues in his next letter:

The next issue [of *Blue Harvest*] will be out around February, or sooner. It will be expanded to 32 pages, and sport better design characteristics and clearer photos. The cover price will remain \$2.95 [anyone

interested in ordering a copy, add \$1.05 for postage].

You may have noticed the Russ Manning artwork on pages 2 and 23 [of *Blue Harvest* #1]. We had originally intended to serialize his work, as the demand is so high. Now that Dark Horse has announced its intent to do the same, we will not be publishing any more Manning strips. We feel that you guys [and gals] will do a much better job, even if we have to wait until next year for it. In addition, we realize that you most likely have acquired all legal rights to this work, and we would not ever want to infringe upon those rights.

Finally, it is possible for you to supply copies of the various Dark Horse *SW* titles for review purposes? Issue three will be spotlighting *SW* comics, touching on works published by Marvel, Blackthorne, Dark Horse, and the various newspaper strips.

Already taken care of. I would urge any readers interested in obtaining a copy of *Blue Harvest* to contact the publishers at the following address:

Mary Jo Fox
Blue Harvest
PO Box 215
Vienna, VA 22181

I've also received copies recently of a couple of other *Star Wars*- or science fiction-related publications (both from Europe) which bear mentioning, for those of you interested in feeding your stellar appetites even more:

Stjeme-Krigerne (in Danish)
Michael Andersen
Johan Kellersvej 8, 1.th.
2450 København SV
Denmark

Tähtivaeltaja (in Finnish; includes

articles and reviews, including
a review of CSW in the
January 1993 Issue)

Helsinki Science Fiction Society
Toni Jerman
Junaliijankuja 1 B 29
00520 Helsinki
Finland



Alex Newborn
2001 Edwards Avenue
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Two quick questions concerning the letters page of *Classic Star Wars* #13: first of all, I know what "line art" is, but what the heck is "zip-a-tone"? Secondly, I would like to be put on a mailing list to receive preview copies of your comics, particularly any *Star Wars*- or *Indy*-related titles.

I think Dark Horse is one of the best things to happen to *Star Wars* since Kenner. Both your revamped effort to bring the newspaper strips to people they may not have reached, and your all-new works, are lovingly, intelligently "done the way I would like to see it done" . . . the highest honor I can bestow.

I'm pleased that enough people voted for the Russ Manning strips (as I certainly did) to be put into comic form. As for titles, something like *Vintage Star Wars* or *Star Wars: The Manning Collection* would work fine. Just so long as you let us know what it will be called (so we can look for it on the shelves) plenty ahead of time.

One thing . . . I don't imagine it will be much of a problem since I doubt Lucasfilm would okay it . . . I don't ever want to see anything like a *Predator* vs. *Artoo* or *Aliens* vs. *Jedis* or *C-3PO* vs. *Magnus*, *Robot Fighter*. Do I make myself clear?

Crystal, Alex. By the way, the entries in the "Name the Russ Manning Series" contest have been piling up in droves here at Stellar Scribes Central. Much thanks to everyone who sent in suggestions; we sincerely appreciate your enthusiasm. We should have a name for the

series chosen by next month, and believe me — we'll keep you posted!

As to what the provocatively labeled *zip-a-tone*, or zip, is . . . it's all those fine little patterns of dots which provide various types of shading and tinting in graphic arts media, including comics. Look closely at Han Solo's jacket in just about any issue of *Classic Star Wars*, and you'll notice that it's usually shaded with zip. By the way, the company that originally manufactured these adhesive or rubber sheets of dot patterns, and gave it the name *zip-a-tone*, has gone out of business; but just as the trademarked names Kleenex and Xerox have become part of our language, so has *zip-a-tone* become a generic name for a number of similar products from other companies.



Coming up next is a critical discourse on Dark Horse's *Star Wars* comics cum hyperspace cosmology lecture, so stay attentive:

Brian C. Lassige
1904 N. 2nd St.
Harrisburg, PA

"Daybreak on Ord Mantell! A holographic message has been delivered to the *Millennium Falcon*." Thus began my favorite single *Star Wars* strip (in 1/3-page format). It was the first Goodwin/Williamson strip I'd ever seen (accompanying an article in *Starlog*). The artwork was superb, the coloring magnificent, the writing compelling — enticing me with a larger story I had no access to. This single Sunday strip captured the essence of *SW* and *TESB*, as well as accents of classic sci-fi and westerns. I was disappointed when I heard the Sunday strips would be recolored for *CSW*, but imagine how I felt when not only the panel containing the above passage, but also most of the rest of this masterpiece strip, was edited out in *CSW*!

Occasionally the writing is

adversely affected by your editing, but more often it is the artwork — the panels you choose to drop or the artwork hidden by overlaying — and even more often, the color change. Granted, not all of the Sunday strips were colored as finely and subtly as the one from 3/22/81 (some I'd be tempted to change too) but even those predominant in primary colors tend to have a vibrance appealing in its own right. It may be the palette of colors provided by your printing process rather than the colorist's choices that bothers me in most cases, but sometimes simply the wrong color is given. On *Aquaris*, I had really been impressed by the original colors of Leia's outfit: white vest and boots, maroon pants, and orangish yellow shirt. Before I had the original strips, I collected black-and-white reprints in *Amazing Heroes* and colored the Sundays. Even then I knew Luke's black-striped poncho in "The Return of Ben Kenobi" was orange — and later I found out I was right (you colored it brown). It is irritating to see *Mystra* with green skin (especially with the clashing red highlights you've colored her outfit with!) and Admiral Ackbar colored bright red. The polished metal of *C-3PO* and *Darth Vader* were depicted better than anywhere else in the original coloring. Al used terrific *zip-a-tone* patterns for holograms, but you simply change the printing color. Couldn't you combine the two techniques? I do think your coloring is improving, though.

Despite all these complaints, I'm glad that you are finally making this body of work, the best beyond-movie *SW* renditions, available to the general fandom. I was extremely disappointed with the *Heir to the Empire* and *Dark Empire* series, while the role-playing game is a continual disappointment. Continuity flaws are constantly made, when in the early days they were rare. These new incarnations are adding too many unnecessary restrictions to

the characters' pasts, and they're totally missing the essence of *SW*. I'd like to see Dave Dorman or the artist who did *Aliens: Book II* [Den Beauvais] do the interior art in new *SW* stories. I'm really not thrilled at the thought of more stories by Veitch and Kennedy. The *Droids* comic sounds interesting; I really liked the cartoon.

Sometimes contradictions aren't what they seem. General Dodonna will appear to die in a future issue of *CSW*. Of course you shouldn't change that; it was published years before *Dark Empire*, so it's correct. Apparently, he didn't die in the explosion. The Imperials found him, imprisoned him, and eventually he was freed — perhaps after *ROTJ*. I'm sure some readers will complain about the possibility of a mere comet carrying Luke's ship faster than any spaceship can travel, and between star systems. Well, obviously this wasn't an ordinary ball of gas, dust, and ice, but rather a hypercomet: a piece of debris resulting from a collision in hyperspace. The nucleus is actually part of a spacecraft, asteroid, comet, etc., that is hurtling through hyperspace with a "shadow" in real space. The coma/tail is composed of disintegrating particles falling out of hyperspace and into real space. Unlike a typical comet whose tail always points away from its sun, a hypercomet's tail always points opposite its direction of motion. Hypercomets also produce strong gravitational disturbances.

I'm glad you'll be reprinting the Manning strips. I think you should still consider it part of the *CSW* series, but if you are so set on giving it a new title, my suggestion is *Vintage Star Wars*, or, rearranged for graphics purposes as *Star Wars: The Vintage Collection*.

I don't, however, think the Alcala strips are worth reprinting. They're really the low point of the strip (surprising considering the good work he's done since). His rendition of *Han Solo at Stars' End* doesn't do the novel justice — in fact, it's rather detrimental.

If I had read the comic strip first, I probably would have been reluctant to read the novel. The rich imagery, characterizations, and story line of the novel are not present. I'd rather see another attempt at rendering it in comics. Alcala's other *SW* story, "Planet of Kadriil" is just embarrassing.

P.S.: I've got a lot of the original strips in 1/2-page size, including most of the Goodwin/Williamson strips. I'm still missing quite a few in this complete format, especially those printed in 1984. If anyone can help me find them, or even color photocopies, I'd appreciate the help. Even the name of a newspaper that carried the strip in this format at the end of its run may be helpful.



Jamala Henderson
Eastman Residence Hall
100 Gibbs St. #81
Rochester, NY 14605

Well, I guess there's a first time for everything! I've never before written a letter of appreciation to a comics company before, but I just had to now because all this *Star Wars* stuff is amazing! I am a recent born-again fan, my interest being revived on a rainy day when I was completely bored and decided to rent all three movies because I hadn't seen them since I was eleven years old. My timing was perfect though, because about four months after that, when I was still bummin' about there not being any more *Star Wars* stuff to read or watch (by then I had already ransacked my local used bookstores for copies of the three Han Solo books and *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*), Timothy Zahn came out with *Heir to the Empire*. Imagine my dismay at having to wait one year between the release of each of the books of the trilogy. After reading those with the appetite of a starving Bantha, I went in search of more *Star Wars* material, which brought me to my local comics store. It took me

several weeks to buy that first copy of *Classic Star Wars*; I wasn't sure whether I would enjoy reading a comic as much as reading a novel or watching the movie. But after I bought that first copy, (which was #8, by the way), I was hooked, and very lucky to succeed in finding #1-7. So now I wait with bated breath each month for the next issue, and even more eagerly await the new *Tales of the Jedi* series. And just recently I've bought the softcover collection of *Dark Empire*. Which leads me to comment on a statement made by you, Mr. Cooper. It was in response to Paul Ens in issue #12. You said, and I quote, "There will be a second Bantam trilogy following Timothy Zahn's *Star Wars* books, authored by Kevin J. Anderson. This trilogy will take place between the events being chronicled by Tom Veitch in his *Tales of the Jedi* and the movies." Well, in the softcover edition of *Dark Empire*, Kevin J. Anderson wrote a prologue-type article that dealt with specific upcoming *Star Wars* novel projects. In this article, he states that his trilogy of books takes place *after Dark Empire*, and that it deals with Luke building a Jedi academy to teach force-sensitive individuals so he can eventually repopulate the race of Jedi. So my question is, has the story line for this trilogy changed since the release of this softcover collection? Thank you for your time and keep up the excellent work!

What happened is, I was working with outdated and erroneous information. As you've surmised, Jamala, from reading Kevin Anderson's introduction to Dark Horse's *Dark Empire* collection, Kevin's three "Jedi Academy" books will be set after both Timothy Zahn's trilogy of books and *Dark Empire* (as well as *Dark Empire II*, for that matter) — which makes it about seven years post-*ROTJ*, according to the official *Star Wars* time line. Sorry for the confusion!

Enough blabbering for now. See y'all next month. Till then, I'm ...
— Bob Cooper



DCP

PRESENTS A
SCAN BY

DARTH SCANNER

*Leeching leads to the Dark Side of the Force.
A good Jedi buys comics and supports the industry!*